



U.S. Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region

Wilderness May 2015 Update



Wilderness Inventory and Evaluation

Background:

The Inyo, Sequoia and Sierra National Forests are revising their land and resource management plans using the 2012 Planning Rule. This rule requires the agency to identify and evaluate lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). In 1964, Congress created the NWPS to protect some of the most natural and undisturbed places in America. Only Congress can designate wilderness; however, federal land managers, citizens or other groups can make wilderness recommendations to Congress.

In August 2014, the Forest Service shared a preliminary wilderness inventory with the public and tribes to gather feedback on the lands that had been inventoried to determine those areas that should or should not be further considered for wilderness recommendation.

Forest Service Current Work:

The inventory and evaluation (steps 1 and 2 of the 4-step wilderness inventory process) on the Inyo, Sequoia, and Sierra National Forests have been completed. The results will be included as an appendix in the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) being prepared for these forest plan revisions. Not all lands included in the inventory and subsequent evaluations are required to be carried forward.

In total, the Forest Service is considering 10 areas for analysis as recommended wilderness. Of these areas, 3 are potential new recommended wilderness areas, and 7 are potential recommended additions to current wilderness areas.

Inyo National Forest: On the Inyo National Forest, there are recommendations for 3 potential new areas and 3 additions to 2 existing wilderness areas:

- 3 potential new recommended wilderness areas, one each in the Glass Mountains, Deep Springs South and the Deep Springs North areas
- 1 potential addition to the eastern side of the South Sierra Wilderness
- 2 potential additions to the White Mountains Wilderness

Sequoia National Forest: On the Sequoia National Forest, there are recommendations for 7 potential additions to 2 existing wilderness areas:

- 2 potential additions to the west side of the Domeland Wilderness
- 1 potential addition to the north side (Fish Creek area) of the Domeland Wilderness
- 4 potential additions to the western and southern sides of the South Sierra Wilderness



Sierra National Forest: On the Sequoia National Forest, there are recommendations for 2 potential additions to existing wilderness areas:

- 1 potential addition to the Ansel Adams Wilderness
- 1 potential addition to the Monarch Wilderness

The Wilderness Process

There are 4 steps in the wilderness evaluation process: inventory, evaluation, analysis and decision. The Forest Service has completed the first 2 steps, and will soon begin the third step – analysis.

- *Step 1 Inventory:* The Forest Service must identify those lands that meet size and improvement requirements for possible inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS).
- *Step 2 Evaluation:* Of lands inventoried, the Forest Service evaluates them for wilderness characteristics based on criteria in Forest Service Handbook 1909.12, Chapter 70.
- *Step 3 Analysis:* The Forest Service reviews the evaluated lands and gathers public feedback to identify which specific areas, or portions thereof, to carry forward into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis. Not all lands included in the inventory or subsequent evaluations are required to be carried forward.
- *Step 4 Decision:* Based on the NEPA analysis, the responsible official will make a decision on specific areas to recommend for inclusion in the NWPS.

Wilderness Facts

- The Inyo, Sequoia and Sierra National Forests manage all or portions of 15 wildernesses.
- The Inyo manages 8 wildernesses: Ansel Adams, John Muir, Owens River Headwaters, Boundary Peak, White Mountains, Inyo Mountains, Golden Trout and South Sierra.
- The Inyo also manages portions of the: Hoover Wilderness (with the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest), the Golden Trout and South Sierra Wildernesses (with the Sequoia National Forest), the Ansel Adams and John Muir Wildernesses (with the Sierra NF), and the White Mountains and Inyo Mountain. Wildernesses (with the Bureau of Land Management)
- The Sequoia manages 4 wilderness areas: Monarch, Jennie Lakes, Domeland and Kiavah.
- The Sequoia also manages a portion of the Golden Trout Wilderness (with the Inyo National Forest) and the Domeland and Kiavah Wildernesses (with the Bureau of Land Management).
- The Sierra manages 2 wilderness areas: Dinkey Lakes and Kaiser.
- The Sierra also manages portions of the Ansel Adams and John Muir Wildernesses (with the Inyo).

#

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.